

# “Hegemonic Science”: Critique Strands, Counterstrategies, and Their Paradigmatic Premises

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## Introduction

Following the postcolonial critique of the universalized European sciences, the era of globalisation and the new wave of internationalisation of sciences initiated by the global competition of nation-states about knowledge has confronted the so-called “Western” social sciences with a new wave of critique, the most radical version of which is the notion of “intellectual imperialism” and the like (for example, see Alatas 2000).<sup>1</sup> In this chapter I will discuss the most typical variations of the critique the so-called Western sciences are facing today.

Four types of theoretical critiques populate the current critical discourses about the world science arena focusing on the universalisation of the “Western” concept of science and theories:

- A. Critiquing theories of the Western sciences
- B. Critique of the world science arena
- C. Critiquing the Western way of theorizing, their epistemologies

I hold that these types of critiques represent the currently most prominent theoretical oppositions to the European model of theorising in the social sciences. I will not make any attempt to collect all the numerous examples and authors across the world, which could illustrate my

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<sup>1</sup> See also M. Kuhn, “Academic Dependence—Neither a Theory of nor a Strategy against Hegemonic Sciences,” in M. Kuhn and J. Kabbanji (eds), *Arab Social Thoughts in International Knowledge Encounters* (Forthcoming, 2013).

discussions. The fashion to support arguments by quoting the more authors the better is part of a discourse style that seems to believe that the more theoreticians share a theory the more it must be theoretically convincing.

I discuss these types along the typical argumentative architecture of their thoughts, representing a typical type of argumentation; again, representing not in any quantitative sense, but with regard to their argumentative structure and their ways of proving thoughts.

I also need to make a remark about the object of these variations of critique, the so-called “Western” sciences and theories. I hold that attributing a geographical space to a theory or a particular way of theorizing, is a cognitive creature of the very “Western” science model it criticises. To put it in other words: The notion of a spatially constructed concept of science, the distinction of science along a “where” is the result of the very view of the science model created by the European science approach, that has been developed through the scientific revolution starting from the seventeenth century and from there universalized across the world.

I also hold that the following discussed variations of critiquing the bourgeois sciences can only be created by the way of thinking the bourgeois sciences have established with their critique of the classical philosophies and successfully spread across the world as the universal model of science.<sup>2</sup> Thus—this is what I will try to show—this critique, more precisely their particular way on constructing their critical thoughts, is the very creature of the science model it—often—so radically claims to oppose.

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<sup>2</sup> The bourgeois model of scientific thinking means the sciences that have been established through the scientific revolution starting from the seventeenth century replacing classical philosophies. This approach to science is based on a particular relation between the thinking subject and its objects, characterized by the subordination of thoughts under the commands of the reified social objectives incorporated in the objects of thoughts. Opposing the speculative nature of the classical philosophies which developed their theories from ideas, the bourgeois concept of scientific thinking approaches the objects of thoughts with a variation of speculative thinking, ex ante constructed models they measure against the objects of thoughts, thus cognitively travelling between their ex ante ideas and the empirical appearance of their object of thoughts. They thus enthrone the nonunderstood appearance of things as an instance proving or disproving their modeled theories. This is the epistemological contradiction of a *cognitive realism*, the cognitive element of the bourgeois concepts of thoughts, Comte so clearly discloses in his tautological notion of “studying the real facts.” See Michael Kuhn, *The World Social Science System* (forthcoming).

## Critique Strands

### A. Critiquing Western “Nonsuitable” Theories—Provincialising Social Thinking?

The postcolonial critique of the Western sciences summarized its opposition against Western sciences under the notion of “Eurocentrism,” accusing the Western sciences and theories of imposing the Western interpretations of the world and interpreting their society model as the mission of mankind of the world. The critique of concepts such as “modernity,” presenting the Western society model as if the Western model of society, economy, and politics was representing the natural development of mankind’s history, represented an opposition to the Western sciences, arguing against the naturalisation of the Western society model that oppressed the world, namely the world of the developing countries.

Obviously aware of a possible misinterpretation of this critique of “Eurocentrism,” Said (2001 [1978]) thought he should warn against this critique of a local ethnocentrism toward a science world that replaces the monopoly of the Eurocentric worldview by a science world that consists of a multiplicity of ethnocentrisms.

This is exactly what the critique of the Western science in the era of globalisation does, obviously after any model of an alternative society had been abolished from the world’s landscape with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and critical thinking had been intellectually expropriated of the option to think in alternative society systems and, thus, in systemic thinking as such.<sup>3</sup> Abjuring the option of systemic thinking and critique, the postcolonial critique of the Western sciences dropped back into claiming against the monopoly of the Western world interpretations to allow for a complementary the parochial view replacing the monopoly of the parochial view of the European sciences with the multiplicity of parochialisms. Exactly this, creating a world of multiple parochialisms, is the idea of the current global concept in organisations like the International Sociology Association, the idea of regionalising the social sciences, put into practice by localising the social science theory production that has its

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<sup>3</sup> See Michael Kuhn, “Facing a Scientific Multiversalism—Dynamics of International Social Science Knowledge Accumulations in the Era of Globalization,” In Michael Kuhn and Doris Weidemann (eds.), *Internationalization of the Social Sciences: Asia—Latin America—Middle East—Africa—Eurasia* (S. 379-409). Bielefeld: transcript.

theoretical point of departure in critiquing Western theories with the notion of the “here nonapplicable” Western theories.

The most typical critique of the “Western” theories in the era of globalisation coming from various global regions argues that theories created in the Western sciences are “nonsuitable” or “not applicable” to particular local context and do not allow an analysis of the social beyond the Western societies. There are numerous variations of this type of critique questioning the local applicability of theories born in the Western sciences, starting from the complaint of a mismatch between the Western theories and the particularism of local phenomena and continuing to the nonapplicability of Western theories beyond the Western societies.

There is no doubt: The Western sciences succeeded in populating the world of sciences with their ideological worldviews. Theories about “modernity” and alike have established the naturalised Western society model as the model of “civilisation,” and the “rest of the world” as on its way towards what *time* will bring about anyway—just as if these Western ideologies wanted to cartoon the historical automatism of “Historical Materialism.” These Western ideologies have attracted massive critique, which has been quite easily absorbed by the Western sciences and meanwhile made part of its mainstream thinking, peacefully coexisting in a pluralistic science world—a coexistence that was always denied by the Western sciences to social theories emanating from the former Soviet Union. Unlike many critics, I argue that it is the dogma of a pluralism of thoughts, the many variations of denying the objectivity of thoughts (latest popular version Bashkar<sup>4</sup>) and its epistemological relativisms, that is the strongest weapon of the bourgeois sciences against any critique, and that it is this relativism that absorbs the critique of the knowledge this science created and creates—given that the critique shares this epistemological relativism. In most case it does.

Indeed, looking at how this critique argues, looking at the argumentative structure of thoughts critiquing Western theories by questioning their geographical reach can be considered as a classical

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<sup>4</sup> Bhaskar’s variation (1997 [1975]) to confirm the dogma of the bourgeois sciences, denying the objectivity of knowledge, reveals how much thinking can obey the thinker’s purpose of what he wants to prove. Concluding from the fact, that we “transform” our knowledge once we face new developments in the world, that we correct or amend our knowledge, that therefore, this knowledge is never objective, only proves what this thinker thinks about knowledge, he can obviously only perceive as a unquestionable dogma or an ever relativized knowledge.

example for critiquing theories without questioning their thoughts and, instead, rather *complimenting* them with other, mostly own, local thoughts. How does the critique of a theory that accuses this theory with the argument that it cannot be applied to a local context argue? Most obviously, this critique implies the assumption that the so critiqued Western theories are acceptable theories in the context of the Western societies, but elsewhere not. However, how is this possible to argue that a theory might be correct, somewhere else, in the West, but not beyond, in other parts of the world? How does this work, that a theory can be a right theory there and is a wrong theory here?

The first option, phrasing a critique of a theory as nonsuitable for a particular local context, appears as if it was a—purposeful—misconception of the *object* of the critiqued theory: If this critique of a nonapplicable theory wants to say that the Western theory is not suitable, because it is a theory about phenomena that do not exist in the non-Western local context and can thus not be valid in the non-Western social world, then this is not a critique of the Western theory or its validity, but just stating that the Western theory is about another object of thought, which only exists in the Western social reality but not elsewhere. If the local context is not the same context as the critiqued theory is about, then this is not a critique of this theory and its lacking applicability, but the simply the observation that the objects of theorizing are not the same. Accusing a theory of not reflecting on the topic the critique wishes to reflect on, is not a critique of that theory. It just states, that the opposed theory does not think about the things the criticism would like it to think about.

Given the second option, that the critiqued theory however insists that it is about the very same objects of thought, then one cannot accuse this theory of not being here or there not applicable, but must discuss the theoretical faults of this theory—here *and* there. A theory cannot be a theory that is a theory about the same objects of thoughts and that is valid somewhere and nonvalid somewhere else, as long as it is about the same objects of thoughts.

However, though the critical notion of a “nonsuitable” theory is presented as if it implies a critique of the “nonsuitable” theory, reflecting on the thoughts and arguments in this type of critique of a theory by accusing it of being not applicable is not the real purpose of this format of critique. If this was the case it would disprove the arguments of this theory no matter what the local context or the object of this theory is. A critique that wants to know if a theory is false or not would have to trace the theory’s

arguments no matter where the social phenomena exist and where not. The notion of a locally nonsuitable theory, however, does not say that a theory is wrong or right, no matter where. It does not even want to discuss the thoughts of the theory. It rather seeks to reject theories without discussing their thoughts. It thus establishes claims, instead, to compliment thoughts its does not want to question or even discuss, with other thoughts, without saying what is wrong or right about the thoughts, which this notion though discusses through the gesture of an opposition.

*Indigenisation: Opposing the Western science monopoly with the parochialism of thinking*

Sato's thoughts (2010) about how to oppose the nonsuitable Western knowledge Sato's thoughts (2010) about how to oppose the nonsuitable Western knowledge and to compliment it with "authentic" knowledge are very instructive to understand the nature of indigenized knowledge: Both methodologically as content wise the indigenisation of knowledge rejects, not critiques, Western thoughts and Western thinking *and* constructs the suitable knowledge as a variation of Western theories and theorizing. This is not to say, that there are no theories that originated from the knowledge traditions beyond the Western sciences they excluded from their concept of scientific knowledge by discriminating this knowledge as indigenous knowledge. It is the indigenization of theorizing as a scientific strategy against the Western science that opposes the Western theories by reproducing both their theoretical constructs as their way of theorizing. (See also D. Weidemann in chapter 6 in this volume.)

Methodologically it constructs its knowledge as a comparison between the indigenized knowledge and the rejected Western knowledge, taking the rejected Western knowledge as the discrete implicit tertium comparationis. Content wise it introduces, here the East Asian, categories, here "aidagara" and "guanxi," rejecting the Western category, here "social capital," as the more appropriate East Asian interpretation of these very categories. Aidagara or guanxi in Sato's critique of the notion of social capital are promoted to better understand what both the Western and the East Asian categories share; and what they share are the theoretical abstractions articulated in the notion of social capital originating from the Western society model this comparison seemingly considers as the nature of thoughts about the social.

Thus, indigenized knowledge consists of a gesture of critique that not only never questions the Western theories nor the Western way of theorizing, but ennobles Western thoughts as the categorial reference basis

for the indigenised knowledge as variations of the Western thoughts.

How far away this gesture of opposition to Western theories is from critiquing these theories can be seen if one has a glimpse at an example of a theory that accuses a Western theory of being “nonsuitable” in a local context, in our example a discussion about a sociological topic, the “Western” category of “social capital,” which is accused not being applicable to East Asian contexts and its East Asian complimentary categories *aidagara* for Japan and *guanxi* for China.

Taking Sato’s critique and discussion of the above categories as an arbitrary example from the numerous variations of this format of critique populating the world of theorizing mainly in developing countries, in this case in East Asia, and what he says about the difference between the Asian and the Western categories of “social capital”<sup>5</sup> and “*aidagara*,” illustrates how much this critique insinuates itself as being a critique of Western categories and how far away such critique is from really critiquing these Western thoughts, which stereotype East Asians with the well known scientific cliché as “collectivists.” (The most prominent example are Hofstede 1984 or Ruth Benedict.) Indeed, the Asian categories, may they be the Japanese version *aidagara* or the Chinese version *guanxi*, within Sato’s discussions about the question “why is social capital, and not “*aidagara*,” “*en*” or “*guanxi*,” the universal sociological concept that describes social relations” (Sato 2010: 193), even reproduce in their comparison with the Western categories the racist stereotypes Western theories have created about East Asia: Beyond any critique of the false dichotomy of individualism versus collectivism Sato’s critique of the nonapplicable notion of social capital in an East Asian contexts just reverses the stereotype value judgments by accusing the Western theories not of any false thoughts in this dichotomy, but of an a Western individualism that, as he feels he needs to say, is ignorant about the collective, methodologically phrased, what he calls the “contextuals”:

Unlike individuals, contextuals which represent actors in methodological contextualism, do not give priority to autonomy and independence but

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<sup>5</sup> It is another sociological Marxist’s, Bourdieu’s privilege to have created a concept, social capital, that no Asian scholar wants to critique. Is it so difficult to see the theoretical mistake, not to mention the political purpose, establishing those, the have-nots, who have nothing but “durable networks” with a sudden “capital,” capitalists would never need, since they own capital?

are dependent on other contextuials (ibid.: 14).

Constructing “contextuials” without being individuals is as false as the whole idea of thinking about societal subjects without societies and then to denounce societies as collectives without individuals or as individuals that do not respect the “contextuials.” While the first version of a false sociological opposition of two false abstractions aims at casting aspersions on Asians as “collectivists,” the critique coming from the “contextualists” aims at casting aspersions on Westerners as “individualists.”

In our example Sato even realizes that his interpretation of the Asian categories substantially do not differ from the critiqued Western terms.

Why is social capital, rather than *aidagara* and *en*, popular among sociologists worldwide, even though the terms are similar? (ibid.: 193)

So what is the problem about social capital if it is so similar to the Asian categories? Since his critique is not a critique of the Western categories, they are according to him even “similar,” his critique that pretends being a critique of the Western categories, is a critique about the global intellectual *leadership*, their global popularity. Discussing the explanatory value of theories is not a concern of the critique that accuses Western theories as elsewhere being unsuitable, applicable, and alike. This critique only plays with the gesture of a critique of theories and rather discusses the question, *Which theory, which provincialism, has the say in the world of theories?*<sup>6</sup>

In fact, as this example shows, this critique, of a unsuitable theory not only does not critique the Western stereotyped value judgments about “Asians,” it builds on their false abstractions, reproduces their argumentative structure as their racist categories, reverses their value judgments, and thus *supports* the universal reign of the Western theories. This critique has not only learned its lesson from the bourgeois science, it is a very part of its way of thinking as of its way of disputing.

Departed from the critique of a unsuitable theory and once arrived at the critique of the global leadership of Western theories, various strands of arguing are from here being developed and elaborated. They range from creating alternative, mostly “Southern” theories, which are in most cases also no critique of Western theories, but alternative views based on the same Western approach of thinking, towards quarrelling about how the Western *leadership* could be eroded, as Sato does in his case for the global



ambitions of the Japanese academia.

What all these variation of critiquing Western theories as being nonsuitable theories have in-common is that they do not question or erode the persuasive basis of Western theories that is, by critically tracing the cognitive architecture of their thoughts. They do in some cases argue against their main ideological messages and thus question the Western theory monopoly (the most current prominent example is Connell 2007), but they rarely attack their theories by critically tracing the argumentative structure of thoughts through which the Western theories are constructed and through which they gain their intellectual credibility.<sup>7</sup> Thus, by leaving

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<sup>6</sup> As if Sato wants to prove my argument that critically reflecting on theories and raising the question about who dominates the global discourses are opposing issues, Sato argues that theories become more dominate the shallower they are: "I would argue that thin concepts spread faster among sociologists than thick concepts, which are loaded with local meanings. This is because when individuals are exposed to a concept and try to understand it, a thin concept has lighter cognitive burdens on its receivers than a thick concept" (Sato 2010: 197). If one leaves aside that this is not a compliment for the world social sciences, his argument clarifies this: To compete with Western theories about who has the say in the global science arena, he calls their international popularity, and without any hesitation he suggests the creation of a local theory that is shallower as any Western theory could ever be: "The second strategy is a particularism-to-universalism-to-particularism strategy. Using this strategy, the Japanese sociologist would invent a broad concept that covers both Japanese and the Western types of social relations, as well as the Chinese type. The Japanese sociologists could then derive local concepts such as *aidagara* and *guanxi* from the more general concept. Generally, this is an authentic scientific strategy and is, therefore, preferable" (ibid.:199). The "preferable" strategy for creating new global "popular" theories is: "Inventing" a theory that is "broad," "thin" and "authentic." The conceptual conservatism uncritically fostering the national histories in this opposition against Western thoughts is obvious. This, not critiquing but competing with Western theories via conserving uncritical national historical concepts is the concern of critiquing Western theories in the era of globalisation in which *competition* about the global popularity of thoughts is ascendant; in such a competition, sound thinking is—very frankly—considered as being quite disturbing.

<sup>7</sup> Maybe the most striking examples of critiquing the ideological effects of Western theories without critiquing the theories are the notions of "modernity" for sociology and the notion of "globalisation" for economics. While the critique of the ideological effects of the notion of "modernity," claiming that the Western model of society represents the history of mankind, is most common, and the "notion" of "globalisation," a term spatialising a nameless something, might also raise some concerns about its ideological implications, the theories summarized by the these notions have rarely been critically contested. It is this circumscribed opposition, restricted on critiquing these theories' ideological impact, that leaves the arguments from which these theories are constructed untouched, and thus allow them to be acknowledged worldwide as an explanation of what is happening in the world. The rest, the extent to which such theories are acknowledged, is a matter of nonscientific means of imposing such theories as the global theoretical standards.

the cognitive basis of the Western theories, the argumentative structure of their thoughts, not only untouched but in many cases even reproducing and arguing with them and creating an alternative ethnocentrism, as in the above case about East Asian sociology, it is not only not surprising that such kind of critique does not only not erode the persuasive basis of the Western theory bodies. It rather also transforms the universalisation of the Western parochial knowledge toward a global knowledge arena consisting of a multiplicity of competing and coexisting parochialisms, competing about which theory has the leadership in the global science arena.

Indeed, accusing Western theories via a new figuring of the notion of “Eurocentrism” in the era of globalisation is an interpretation of an older question that asks: How do the Western theories shape the “captive minds” of academics? (Alatas 1974), except that now the question has become: Which parochial sciences *dominate* the scientific discourses in the globalising science world? No doubt, it is the European sciences, which have imposed their views about the world on the world. However, making the opposition to the European sciences a matter of the global scientific leadership and shifting the theoretical *leadership* from the European monopoly toward a multiplicity of parochial world interpretations, does not only leave the Western theories uncritiqued; just as if they want to ignore Said’s warnings, this critique of elsewhere locally nonapplicable theories rather aims at replacing the Western theoretical leadership with the multiplicity of spatially restricted ways of theorizing, the final globalisation of very bourgeois concept of science introduced to the world with the most active support of those who might believe to critique the Western model of science or their theories. It is another irony of the world sciences that its major current approach critiquing Western theories in the era of a globalising science arena helps to strengthen and globalise the position of the Western way of theorizing.<sup>8</sup>

## **B. The World Science Arena—A Battlefield of National Science Communities?**

A second strand of critique spread across the world and mainly articulated by social scientists in the so-called developing countries critically discusses not the Western theories, but the world science arena. It opposes mostly with very radical terms the world science system, ranging from the more modest notions about inequalities toward the more radical version of accusing the Western sciences of a “scientific imperialism” (Alatas 2003) and alike. (See chapter Okamoto in this book.) This critique accuses the

Western sciences of “dominating” (···) hegemonizing (···) an “unequal” or “asymmetric” (Keim 2008) science system, mainly arguing that the “peripheric” sciences are ruled by “scientific centres”—and do not notice that all these complaints about the *conditions* under which social scientists around the world accumulate knowledge operate with the major constructs of this science system that implies these conditions as its—inevitable—outcomes.

Though one could argue that the critique of the world science arena in which social sciences around the world produce knowledge does of course not oppose the thoughts reigning the world knowledge productions, since this is not their topic, one could assume that such critique, that excludes the theoretical substance of thoughts from their agenda, cannot be of such an

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<sup>8</sup> It is a very particular double irony in the history of the world sciences that it is the correct opposition of academics from developing countries against a false opposing theory, their critique of the “Historical Materialism”, an ideology the Soviet Union had established against the Western ideology production and spread across the world as an opposing world view, mainly into the colonised world supporting their fights for independence, that this *critique* of the Soviet Union ideologies has helped to established *space*, the epistemological creature of the bourgeois sciences, as a worldwide acknowledged epistemological dimension, more than the universalisation of the bourgeois concept of science itself ever could. Chakrabarty’s error in his opposition against “Historical Materialism”—a historical epistemological twofold accident, the wrong self-critique of a wrong theory, the ideology of the Soviet Union, an interpretation of Marx as a type of scientific religion—is that he critiques Marx via critiquing a caricaturelike Marx interpretation, that could not more contradict Marx’s theories. It was Engels, who was often critiqued by Marx, when Engels used the term “Marxism,” thus transforming Marx theories about capitalism into an *approach* to science, who perpetrated the caricaturelike notion of the “Historical Materialism.” First, uncritically adopted by social movements against colonialism and used for the independence of colonial countries, then, once the former colonies became independent, critiqued by the same academics in the new states as an intervention into their *local* national identity-building process, this science ideology of the Soviet Union was seen by theorists from the periphery as a theory that did not know any “where,” that is, did not allow the creation their own *local* worldviews. In fact, the Soviet ideology subsumed the whole world under its odd dogma of an *historical automatism*, in which authorities in the Soviet Union did not themselves believe. The impact of introducing the “where” as an epistemological dimension of thoughts since then has flourished as an opposition against the Western sciences, under the notion of indigenous sciences, Southern sciences, and the like. In any case, it was and is this opposition against the Western theories that paved the way for universalising the “where,” space, mostly politically defined, as a worldwide epistemological dimension of science, thus extending the bourgeois concept of science in away the bourgeois sciences never could, due to its own very political, i.e., nationalized “where.” Since then, the world of sciences consists of the global theoretical roundabout of no-where valid theories. On international science discourses, the circle of a spatialised expertise about the local “wheres” of knowledge results in the global nondiscourse culture among the many local expertises.

importance. However, more than any critique of thoughts and theories, it is this critique of the world science system that represents the most prominent opposition to what is called the “hegemonic sciences,” a critique originating from the developing countries, meanwhile shared as a kind of global synonym for a critique of the global science world.

In the following section I will not discuss all the different variations and aspects of this critique strand of the world science arena, but just raise some questions about the key scientific subject populating all those critical reflections about the global science arena, that is the “national science communities,” *the* unquestioned construct also uncritically used by the above radical critique of the global science arena. Discussing this, the subject all these variations of critique argue with the notion of a world science system consisting of “national science communities,” discloses the tragic errors of this critique as its affirmative standpoint.

Indeed, this idea of a science community as the subject populating the world science arena, shared by the most radical critique of the global science arena, is one of these typical constructs of the bourgeois sciences, namely sociology, everywhere seeing “communities,” constructed from wherever sociologists find people who have nothing in-common but competing or opposing interests. In this case, the subject populating the world science arena, the “national science communities,” are constructed—again mainly by sociologists, however used by all disciplines in their discourses about the world sciences—from the very competitive and opposing interests academics have within the Western concept of science via the organisation of science as a competition about knowledge.

National social science communities, the nowhere questioned subjects of the world science system, are imagined as *the* internationally competing subjects, organisational entities of academics constructed from simply sharing the same nationality. This notion of national science communities seriously seems to believe that academics working internationally are on an international mission representing a national entity in their battles against other national science communities about *how much* they, the national science communities, participate in what this critique calls the “growth of knowledge.” Do they seriously want to say that scientists attending conferences, publishing books, reflecting on theories from other scientists abroad or collaborating in research projects, according to the imaginary world of these critical theories, are all trying to contribute to a competition among national science communities to beat each other in producing *more* knowledge than the other national science community? They do. Are they

seriously thinking an internationally acting academic is a kind of intellectual soldier gathered and organised in national science entity fighting a battle between national science organisations from different countries?

One could already learn from a glimpse of the historic emergence of the disciplinary specialisation of social sciences that the Western model of nation-based societies organises its knowledge production as a scientifically specialised disciplinary service and by no means as a national entity or a national organisation. This is why such a thing as a national science community, gathering the social sciences under a national entity, nowhere exists, neither via a national institutional body nor via a nationally unified theoretical approach (see for example, Wallerstein et al. 1996).

There is no such thing as the French, Japanese, or Indonesian social sciences. There are social sciences *in* these countries, working under the same conditions, rules, and infrastructures of national science policies, but the sciences are not a nationally constructed entity. Sciences anywhere in the world are constructed along their scientific specialisations and the according disciplinary organisations, and the history of science is the history of a battle among disciplines about their disciplinary, nonnational "territories" (Becher and Trowler 2001).<sup>9</sup>

These disciplinary organisations share scientifically much more with disciplinary organisations in other countries than they share with any other science discipline within the same countries. No academic in any country shares as a theorist anything national with all other academics that would allow them to scientifically gather as a national science entity as the category of national science communities, according to all the critical discourses populating the world sciences, insinuates. Academics in all countries and across the disciplines are subordinated to their specific national science policies, funding policies, and laws *framing* their academic activities. However, this joint political infrastructure does not constitute the academic subject of a national entity.

People in the post-World War II world project of a world consisting of nation-states are constructed as national subjects, citizens, and as scientists that the bourgeois model of sciences constructs in the world of science along a specialisation of knowledge, a specialisation that reflects the knowledge needs of the bourgeois society, its economy, and its politics,

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<sup>9</sup> See Wallerstein et al. (1996); more recently, see Becher and Trowler (2011).

not along their nationalities and their accordingly constructed science disciplines. More than that, the era of globalisation has created science as a global resource the globally competing nation-states and global “players” are trying to get under their local command.

In this globalised sciences world, the construct of national science communities only occurs in the practical *political and institutional* access that nation-states establish on academics, treating all academics alike by disregarding their scientific peculiarities and disregarding their nationalities *as if they were* nothing else but a national resource for the international economic battles nation-states initiate and supervise.

Moreover, those who propose the notion of the “national science communities” have apparently not yet noticed that in the era of globalisation, the globalisation of capitalism under the global supervision of those imperial nation-states, who have a global reach, the whole world is considered as a resource for economic growth, if possible invoiced in the currencies of the imperial powers, including the world’s people and also including the world’s professional thinkers. One’s nationality is the least thing a globalist imperialist would care about. A glimpse on the nationalities of academics in the leading Western universities would reveal how irrelevant nationalities today in the practice of national science policies are. Only critical academics, who believe and seeming share the nation-state view of the era of colonialism, are concerned about national science communities and consider, caught by their blind and vain view of their rankings about global prestige, the nationality of academics as a relevant category under which they gather academics in their imaginary subject of the global science arena.

From this—very outdated—political perspective, and only from this perspective, the critique of the world science arena, which uncritically accommodates its views and operates with this view of the national political elites on the world science arena, these critical reflections about the world sciences—very consequently—occasionally finds allies in the political elites or even in the—very updated—political and economic imperialism of the real world powers. Accordingly, the same critique rarely detects the political elites in the—developing—countries of their own nationality as those who do dictate the “unequal,” “asymmetric,” or “imperial” conditions under which their “national science communities” are expected to compete and occasionally sympathize with and speculate on how shifts in the global imperial power balances between the political and economic imperialists could have an impact on the global ranking of

their “dependent” science communities.<sup>10</sup>

### **C. Critiquing the Western Way of Theorizing**

Unlike those two above critique strands caught in the Western science concept and in the political national missions of academics in a globalised (science) world, there is also a critique that questions the bourgeois concept of science. This critique focuses on two aspects of the bourgeois sciences:

Concerned with the observation of a world guided by armies of scientists and the ideological effects the Western theories have on the world, namely, the world of the developing countries, the rationale of—what this critique calls—the Western concept of rationalism becomes a subject of critique. The other version of critique critically discusses another very correct observation that is that despite of all the armies of scientists, social sciences theories play a very ideological but no practical role in practical considerations of citizens; instead they are mainly the subject of the exclusive discourses among the professional knowledge experts, the academics. Those who subscribe to this critique rightly observe that the world employs masses of people who are professional thinkers, but the knowledge they create does not anywhere guide anyone’s practical life, except the academic disputes among the professional thinkers about their thoughts.

Critique of theories and of the way of theorizing is an elementary ingredient of the Westerns concept of science. As long as one respects the rules of the Western science, that is his or her methodological apparatus, which defines what can be acknowledged as scientific knowledge and what not, one can write any nonsense and present this as sound scientific knowledge.<sup>11</sup> However, if one critiques these definitions, defining what science is and what not, adherents of European science are very good at denouncing those who dare disregard or oppose their holy enlightened definitions of science. It is the missionary view on the world that European

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<sup>10</sup> As an example F. Alatas, who frankly speculates and expresses his disappointments about the imperial power of Japan and its effects on the global science power distribution: “Here it would be interesting to speculate about how academic dependency may be affected by the shifts in the balance of economic power. It is not uncommon in Asia to hear optimistic views to the effect that if Asian economies overtake the West, Asian culture will become more dominant globally: . . . But, it is doubtful that any Asian nation or Asia as a whole would become dominant in the social sciences on a global scale. The case of Japan is instructive in this case. Japan is a world economy power but it is not a social science power by any means” (Alatas 2003: 605).



science have,<sup>12</sup> convinced about their model of science as the science of mankind, that prevents them from responding to critique with critique, but rather with denouncing their critics. Societies and scientists around the world have thus received their racist labels.<sup>13</sup> Their insulting weight is politically carefully distinguished and dosed dependent on how much they are politically predetermined as an enemy for the US imperialism's ambition to decide about the "good and the evil." While Africans are (today) politically irrelevant to the global Western crusaders, they nonetheless are insulted as being "incurably obscure," while the Islamic world, which dares to refuse adjusting their societies to the Western model, and who create their own Islamic science approach, receives as a response the threat of a "clash of civilisations" (Huntington 1996).<sup>14</sup> So what is this critique that attracts such insulting responses?

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<sup>11</sup> To illustrate this with one example, here from economic theories: The title of the book of the latest Nobel Prize winner, Sims, is "Macroeconomics and Reality." Within the bourgeois model of thoughts, stating that thoughts are the product of the fantasy of the thinker he then compares with the real world, as reward with a Nobel Prize. In fact, his book title already frankly reveals that the "Macroeconomics," his thoughts about the macro-economy must be no thoughts about the real macro-economy, otherwise these thoughts could not be compared with the "Reality." The other pole of his comparative construct, the "Reality," presented as the most possible radical abstraction possible, the reality, can also not be any phenomena in the real economy, since this economy cannot be theoretically grasped with the notion of the "Reality." While thinking about the economy the highly rewarded thoughts of this thinker obviously travel between hypothetical assumptions he calls "Macroeconomics" and a "Reality" *he creates* for his cognitive journey between his theoretical models and a reality he has modeled for this journey. Thoughts like this are therefore not at risk of being ruled out of contention for the Nobel Prize. Discussing the favourite assumptions of a demand/supply equation he states: "In principle we realize that it does not make sense to regard 'demand for meat' and 'demand for shoes' as the products of distinct behaviour, any more than it would make sense to regard 'price of meat' and 'price of shoes' equations as products of distinct categories of behaviour if we normalized so as to reverse the place of prices and quantities in the system. Nonetheless, we do sometimes estimate a small part of a complete demand system with part of a complete supply system – supply and demand for meat say. In doing this, it is common and reasonable to make shrewd aggregations and exclusion restrictions so that our small partial-equilibrium system omits most of the many prices we know enter the demand relation in principle and possibly include a shrewdly selected set of exogenous variable we expect to be especially important in explaining variation in meat demand (e.g., and Easter dummy in regions where many people buy hams for Easter dinner)" (Sims 1980: 2). Where the modeled thoughts do not coincide with the modeled reality, the reality is adjusted to the model via shrewd aggregations. This is the most common free floating way of speculative thinking in the bourgeois sciences, rightly rewarded with a Nobel Prize.



## **C1. Critique from African Thinkers—Trapped by the Cognitive Warship of Facts?**

The critique coming from African scholars as from other parts of the world about the Western way of theorizing always assembles around an opposition of the notion of the rationalism of Western sciences, which is a response to the Western critique of an “incurable religious Africa,” which means an irrational Africa. I will neither trace nor discuss in this section all the elaborated philosophical arguments implied in the most elaborated critique African scholars have about the Western concept of science. Since the notion of an “incurable religious Africa” is anyway only an insult about their incurable nature and which rejects any critical discussions with African scholars about their critique of the Western science, these insults are also not my issue.

In this section I just want to draw the attention to one implication, one assumption in the critique African scholars phrase when opposing the

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<sup>12</sup> To illustrate this cognitive attitude of Western social scientists I quote from a book titled *Nations Matter* by Craig Calhoun. According to the book cover, “*Nations Matter* argues that pursuing a purely postnational politics is premature at best and possibly dangerous.” The first sentence of the “President of the Social Science Research Council” in this book is this one: “Nationalism is not a moral mistake” (all Calhoun 2007). My point quoting this is not to argue about nationalism. A world of nation-states are *the* project of the US post-World War II imperialism and that a president of the social science research council celebrates nationalism as *the* analytical perspective for social scientists confirms that he is the best president. I only quote this to point out the religiouslike jargon of a leading Western social scientist, an attitude in which his views are presented to the world as if they the sacred commands from a world social science messiah. Similarly Wallerstein: Though Wallerstein is not a person one would suspect of harboring US imperial thoughts, in his latest publication, arguing heavily against “European universalism” (Wallerstein 2006), he discusses at length under the headline “Whose Right to Intervene? Universal Values against Barbarism”, bothering the world with the scruples of left US intellectuals with the question, what circumstances would cleanly legitimize military interventions and discusses the missionary activities of Las Casas, most obviously to build a congenial memorial for Immanuel Wallerstein.

<sup>13</sup> As an example, Nisbett, who has gained a reputation as being sympathetic with with East Asian thinking, denounces his students coming from East Asia in the more sophisticated style of a Western science patriarch: “The truth is, however, that this linear rhetoric form is not at all common in the East. For my Asian students, I find that the linear rhetoric form is the last crucial thing they learn on their road to becoming fully functioning social scientists” (Nisbett 2005: 196). See also the chapter in this book by Okamoto.

<sup>14</sup> The more diplomatic version, phrased by the scientific spokesmen of an imperial power, that would like to question the US science imperialism, is articulated in the so-called Metris Report, written on behalf of the European Commission by an Expert Group with leading European scholars (European Commission 2009).

“Western rationalism.” African scholars consider this Western rationalism “as no longer valued without contestation” (Mbembe 2000: 27) and advocate “the recognition of the existence of forms of knowledge distinct from scientific knowledge...the multiplicity of worlds and forms of life, the existence of narrative knowledge distinct from scientific knowledge, the plurality of forms of invention of difference and the universal, the redefinition of relations between objectivity and representation” (ibid.).

Logically very similar to the aforementioned critique of Western theories as “nonapplicable” to the non-Western world, it is remarkable to notice that the critique coming from African scholars also contests Western rationalism by advocating the recognition of *other forms of knowledge* “distinct from scientific knowledge.” Their opposition to the Western concept of science is not opposing the Western form of scientific knowledge, but its exclusive definition of what counts as scientific knowledge.

This is remarkable since advocating other forms of knowledge as a critique of the Western concept of science, the Western concept of theorizing as an exclusive rationalism, apparently considers the Western rationalism as a rational way of thinking.<sup>15</sup>

The modern Western social sciences—thoughts traveling between their imaginary theoretical ex ante models, assumptive theories, hypotheses, and the like, and their descriptive perception of the facts, a never understood and methodologically manipulated phenomenology, established as the instance for proving what they call the “evidence” of thoughts—this is supposed to be rationale? Theories, compressed in concepts like “modernity,” the market imagined and proved with accordingly constructed facts as an equalizer of demand and supply, an economic theory taking scarcity as the founding element of an economy that dumps and produces everyday values this theory does not even know how to count, not to mention to explain, political theories thinking the nation-state as ever solving problems only a nation-state can ever create, and so on and on—all these most inconsistent and preoccupied thoughts, an epistemology that preferably proves the impossibility of objective science

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<sup>15</sup> See also J. B. Quedraogo and Carlos Cardoso, *Reading in Methodology, African Perspectives* (CODESRIA, 2011). This volume focuses on critical epistemological and methodological discussion of the Western science approach. It should however be stressed that as much as such epistemological debates help theory go beyond the level of social science engineering, they cannot replace any critique of the Western theories.

the Western sciences believe they are practicing, all this is supposed to be rational theories and a rational approach to theorizing?

Is this African critique, that hesitates to oppose this way of theorizing other than complimenting it with other types of knowledge, may be also a victim of the reflexive realism, the descriptive view of the bourgeois science, they here apply to their reflections about the Western science approach, trapped by the methodological apparatus of the Western sciences? Does this critique possibly mix up the rationale *appearance* of the bourgeois concept of science, presented via its sophisticated methodological apparatus with the irrationalism of the cognitive architecture of Western theories? Do they mix up in their critique the rational appearance with a theoretically irrational thinking not drawn from the Western theories but from the ideological *impact* Western thoughts have on thoughts in Africa, and believe this to be the result of a Western rationalism. Do they possibly mean that the effects Western theories have on African thoughts is the result of a scientific rationalism, because they, the Western theories, present themselves as being methodologically rational? Is this critique also a victim of looking at the very facts about the Western science, trapped by their warship of facts, here by the fact of a methodologically presented rationalism, that allows the presentation of the most bizarre preoccupied thoughts as rational, once they can prove these to be constructed according to the rules of their methodological apparatus. Is there anything this concept of science cannot prove, preferably in their epistemological departments proving the impossibility of rational knowledge?

## **C2. Critique from the Islamic Social Science Approach—Opposing the Expropriation with a Twofold Expropriation from Knowledge**

The most striking irrationalism of the Western societies, of the global capitalism and their political systems, democracy, certainly is that this society has established and institutionalised sciences to a greater extent than ever before in history, established institutions, universities, with armies of professionally thinkers—and denies the knowledge they produce has any say in the decision makings of this society. Not only in the sense that the political decisions can only be made by another professional elite, the politicians, and are strictly a matter of the political spheres, decisions in which the knowledge of sciences is not allowed to take part, unless as the provider of nonbinding advice; this society also distinguishes its citizens as professional knowledge holders and knowledge consumers (See Kuhn 2007: 11ff). The latter get pieces of knowledge to prove their appropriateness

for the higher level of jobs, ruling the rest. More than that, the creation of knowledge has even gained the ideological status of governing a “knowledge-based society” while at the same time in a very fundamental sense decisions about any aspects of people’s lives are not taken in relation to knowledge but to the rules, lawful considerations about life priorities, transformed into indisputable moral principles, and finally established with the political power of the political elites and the ideological power of the professional thinkers. Decisions guided by knowledge but violating laws are thought not a matter of debates, but of sanctions.

This political definition of the role knowledge does and does not play in a society that creates knowledge for other purposes, disempowering people’s decisions from knowledge and subordinating their decisions under the power of laws, internalised as the moral principles of life, is the political reason for the dogma of a relativism of scientific knowledge, which many epistemologically engaged philosophers have so passionately proven to be a necessity of the nature of scientific thinking. Indeed, if knowledge must be ever subjective it cannot serve as an instance of any decision making.

It is precisely this mind set separating knowledge from the practical concerns and considerations of decision making in the bourgeois concept of science,<sup>16</sup> implied in the dogma of its knowledge relativism, that the Islamic critique addresses in its opposition to the Western approach to science.

“Knowledge” falls short of expressing all the aspects of *’ilm*. Knowledge in the Western world means information about something, divine or corporeal, while *’ilm* is an all-embracing term covering theory, action and education. (Ahktar, n.d.)

Their critique hits the above-mentioned point when they critique the Western concept of knowledge. The notion that the concept of *ilm* embraces “theory, action and education” opposes the Western concept of science by insisting on knowledge as a means for the concerns of societal practices.

However fueling the lacking practical dimension of knowledge with the moral ideas of the religion of Islam does make knowledge a practically

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<sup>16</sup> The notion “This is only theory” illustrates the role theorizing plays in the mind architecture of the bourgeois citizen. Theory is denounced as being practically irrelevant, theory is wishful thinking.

relevant instance in thinking, but it introduces cognitive instances that define thoughts beforehand with the moral ideas of this religion and directs thinking toward given results, postulated by their religious beliefs. Thus the Islamic concept of knowledge, which considers knowledge as an instance of the societal practices, binds this thinking to the moral framework of their religiously preoccupied assumptions.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to this, in the Islamic concept of knowledge, rightly critiquing the split mind in the Western concept of knowledge delegating knowing into a sphere separated from practically thinking about the world of action, the concept of *'ilm* implies a religiously motivated variation of the Western politically motivated elite distinction in knowledge holders and knowledge consumers. It distinguishes *'ilm* into a hierarchy of knowledge levels the highest one of which can only be reached by a religiously defined elite.<sup>18</sup>

Once the Islamic concept of knowledge distinguishes between the type of thinking of an enlightened cognitive elite, exclusively gaining the stage of “knowledge by the unity of subject and object” and thinking that never reaches this unity guided by the ideas of religious beliefs, this thinking cannot know, it compliments the interventions of a lawful thinking the Western societies provide for the ordinary knowledge holders as the way of building their obedient minds with a twofold morally guided *and* a lawfully thinking mind, supervised by an chosen political *and* religiously enthroned elite.

Rightly arguing against the Western concept of knowledge that

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<sup>17</sup> Introducing the moral principles guiding thinking toward religiously defines societal practices also conflicts with the ideas of knowledge, as the controversial discourses among the Islam sciences show. Their ongoing debate about whether scepticism can be considered as a creative element in the creation of thoughts or eroding the basis of believing illustrates the epistemological contradictions of introducing the moral ideas of a religion into scientific thinking. “It is generally believed that in Islam, as far as belief is concerned, there is no place for doubting and questioning the existence of God, the prophethood of Hadrat Muhammad (S) and the Divine injunctions, that Islam requires unequivocal submission to its dictates. This general belief is a misconception in the light of Islam’s emphasis on *'aql*. In the matter of the fundamentals of faith (*usu-l al-Din*), the believer is obliged to accept *tawhid*, *nubuwwah* and *ma'd* (in the Shi'i faith, *'adl*, i.e. Divine Justice, and *imamah* are also fundamentals of faith) on rational grounds or on the basis of one’s existential experience. This ensures that there is room for doubt and skepticism in Islam before reaching certainty in *Iman*” (Ahktar).

<sup>18</sup> “The sufis have described *iman* as consisting of three stages: *'ilm al-yaqin* (certain knowledge), *'ayn al-yaqin* (knowledge by sight) and *haqq al-yaqin* (knowledge by the unity of subject and object). The last stage is attainable by an elect few” (ibid).

expropriates thinking from its societal practices and reserving the highest level of knowing for a chosen elite, and complimenting the subordination of thinking under a lawful thinking in the Western concept of knowledge with the subordination of thinking under the moral ideas of the Islamic religion, is a critique of the Western sciences, but a critique that adds another binding moral instance to an already morally misguided concept of knowledge.

## **Conclusions**

The history of thoughts seems to progress via an opposition constructed in alternative ways of doing the same.

The strongest, if not *the* weapon of the Western sciences against their critics is their concept of critique. More precisely critiquing theories is the mode this approach to science has established together with the universalisation of its concept of science.

The relativism of hypothetical thinking implies a concept of critique that discusses theories via investigating the methodological apparatus with which the theories are constructed, not the thoughts of the theories themselves. Any theory is acknowledged that supports its whatever preoccupied thoughts, its hypotheses, with their proof through the facts, facts the theory constructs with the methodological apparatus through the perspective of its hypothetic thoughts; thus there are no facts the methodological apparatus could not provide for the hypothetical thoughts, since the facts are nothing but the constructed illustrations created and interpreted through the assumptive thoughts. This circular relation between the thinker and his object of thinking implies the epistemological necessity that all thoughts that can be proved by the facts this thinking constructs for its proof, proving them as “evident” thoughts.

Relativizing thoughts, in the first place relativizing thoughts that articulate critique, is an epistemological necessity in this bourgeois concept of thinking. In this model of thinking, critique can only articulate alternative thoughts, alternative assumptive theories also proved by the facts it constructs for its proof.

It is only this format of critiquing theories that can intervene into theorizing in this concept of thoughts by complimenting other, in the same way proved thoughts, created and proved with the same circular procedure. It is this format of critique that stimulates critique as an ever-reactivated impulse for the creation of an ever-relativized knowledge and that at the

same time immunizes knowledge against a critique that would trace any thoughts.

In this circular world of competing proved and relativized theories, the discourses among the holders of this knowledge can only prove the validity of their relative thoughts against others by monopolizing the production and publication of relativized theories. Monopolizing relativized thoughts is the only way to relativize their relativity. Monopolizing, that is, aiming at a *leadership of thoughts* by dominating the world of thoughts, is therefore the way this concept of science serves the cognitive impetus in scientific thinking seeking knowledge, its concept of cognition denies.

It is a tragic mistake to oppose the Western monopoly on theorizing, since monopolizing thoughts and arguing about the monopolisation of thoughts is the essential part of the Western sciences. Questioning this monopoly and building alternative local knowledge regimes opposes the Western sciences, but it opposes them by imitating, thus reinforcing the Western science approach, responding to the Western leadership in theorizing by struggle over scientific leadership.

Questioning the thoughts of the Western theories, and thus eroding the universal reign of Western thoughts, is not what the above discussed variations of critique do. Critiquing, not complimenting, thoughts is not an option the Western model of thinking knows. However, the fact that Western sciences only know this format of a relativized critique does not mean that it is not possible. It is epistemologically “forbidden.” That is why it is necessary and the only way to critique.

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